

# GOD AND MAN: WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR MAN COLOSSIANS 01:12–14

## ***DIVISION OVERVIEW: (Col 01:12–23)***

### ***Jesus Christ, Person and Works***

This is one of the greatest passages of Scripture ever written. Its importance cannot be overstressed. It is a passage that reveals the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is supreme, above all both in His Person and in His work. Who He is and what He has done for man can never be matched. This is the purpose of this great passage, a passage that covers so much in twelve brief verses: to show to the world just who Jesus Christ is and what He has done.

Griffith Thomas says, “[This] constitutes one of the most important documents in the New Testament for the study of Christology” (*Studies in Colossians and Philemon*, ed. by His Daughter. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1973, p. 45).

Bishop W.R. Nicholson is quoted by Griffith Thomas as saying: “[This is] a Christological statement [that] has scarcely an equal, certainly no superior” (*Studies in Colossians and Philemon*, p. 45).

William Barclay says, “This is a passage of...such importance that we shall have to spend some considerable time on it” (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p. 135). He then proceeds to write some seventeen pages on the twelve verses.

A.T. Robertson says: “[This is a] wonderful picture of the person and work of Christ...a full and final answer to the...[false teaching] about Jesus Christ by speculative philosophy and to all modern efforts [to give a] ‘reduced’ picture of Christ” (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Vol. 4, p. 477).

Matthew Henry forcefully says: “Here is a summary...of the gospel concerning the great work of our redemption by Christ” (*Mathew Henry’s Commentary*, Vol. 5, p. 752).

The Pre-eminent Christ: God’s Dear Son Col 01:12-23

A. God and Man: What God Has Done for Man, Col 01:12-14

B. God and Christ (Part I): The Person of Christ, Col 01:15

C. God and Christ (Part II): Christ the Creator, Col 01:16-17

D. God and Christ (Part III): Christ the Head of the Church, Col 01:18-19

E. God and Christ (Part IV): Christ the Reconciler of All Things, Col 01:20-23

Note one other thing about this passage. It is couched in the midst of praise and thanksgiving, not in a sermon (Mathew Henry. *Mathew Henry’s Commentary*, Vol. 5, p. 752).

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## ***Introduction (Col 01:12–14)***

God has done three great things for man, things that are so great that they just explode human imagination. If we diligently concentrate upon these three things, the depth of what God has done will erupt in our lives for good. We will never be the same. What has God done for man?

- I. God has given us an inheritance (v. 12).
- II. God has delivered us from the dominion of darkness (v. 13).
- III. God has redeemed us, even forgiven our sins (v. 14).

### ***I. Colossians 01:12 God's Inheritance***

God has given us an inheritance. Before we proceed to discuss the inheritance, note two other points.

1. We have to be *prepared*, that is, qualified and made fit before we can receive the inheritance. Man is not qualified or fit to receive anything from God, especially an inheritance, not in his present sinful and corruptible state. If he is to ever receive an inheritance from God, he first has to be made fit and acceptable to God. Note: this is exactly what Scripture says: God has made us qualify. It does not yet say what He did to make us qualify; it simply declares that God has *fitted* us to receive an inheritance from Him.
2. We share the inheritance with all other saints in light. Remember, *saints* (*hagios*) simply means those who have set their lives apart to live for God (see Col. 1:2). God is Light; therefore, when a person turns his life over to God, he is turning his life over to Light. He is to live and move and have his being in light, that is, in God. He is to walk in the *light of God Himself*, so much so that he, the believer, is called the light of the world. This is what is meant by “saints in the kingdom of light.” They are people who have committed their lives to walk in the light of God. Therefore, they are saints, persons set apart in the light of God.

The point is this: every saint who lives and moves in the light of God is to receive the inheritance of God. But note: since God is light, only those *set apart in light* can live with God. Any person who sets his life apart *in darkness* can never receive the inheritance of God, for darkness can never dwell in light. The light destroys and eliminates the darkness.

3. God has given believers an inheritance. What is the inheritance? Scripture describes the inheritance in the following ways.
  - a. We are heirs of eternal life.

***Titus 3:7*** *So that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.*

- b. We are heirs of salvation.

**Heb 1:14** *Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?*

- c. We are heirs of the promises made to Abraham, that is, the promises to inherit the world and to be a citizen of a great nation of people.

**Gal 3:29** *If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (See Rom. 4:13)*

**Rom 4:13** *It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.*

- d. We are heirs of glory.

**Rom 8:17** *Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

- e. We are heirs of righteousness.

**Heb 11:7** *By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.*

- f. We are heirs of the gift of life.

**1 Pet 3:7** *Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.*

- g. We are heirs of God's very special favour — heirs that will stir the praise of His glory.

**Eph 1:11-12** *In him [Christ] we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.*

**Eph 1:14** *Who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory.*

- h. We are heirs of the reward, of the inheritance and all that it includes.

**Col 1:12** *Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.*

**Col 3:24** *Since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*

- i. We are heirs of the eternal inheritance.

**Heb 9:15** *For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance — now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.*

- j. We are heirs of an immortal and perfected body that will be given us when Christ returns.

**1 Cor 15:50-54** *I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed — in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.” (see 1 Pet. 1:3-4)*

## II. **Colossians 01:13 Deliverance from Darkness**

God has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of His dear Son.

1. Note two things about the “dominion of darkness.”
  - a. The “dominion of *darkness*” indicates there is a kingdom, a realm, a world of darkness. Darkness means just what is indicated: a person is unable to see and understand or know. Picture the scene: a person trying to walk and stumble through a world of darkness. He cannot see or understand:  
=> who he really is           => where he has come from  
=> where he is               => where he is going

This is the very situation of natural man, the man who has not been delivered from the world of darkness by God. The man in darkness does not know...

- who he is: why God created him and what God has planned for man.
- where he has come from: that his origin is God: that God created him.
- where he is: that the world was made by God and that it has an eternal purpose in the plan of God.
- where he is going: that he is an eternal being who is to either live forever in the light of God’s presence or in the darkness away from God’s presence.

The point to see is that darkness is a realm or a world in which the unbeliever lives and moves. He never knows these things, never knows the truth of his world and life nor of God. He walks in a life and world of darkness, blinded from the truth. (See *Darkness*, Eph. 5:8.)

b. The “dominion of darkness” also indicates that the darkness is not only a realm or world, but a *dominion* — an active dominion that enslaves men and stands in opposition to the light of God. The *world of darkness* is a kingdom in rebellion against God. This is the very reason men struggle against God so much. It is difficult to imagine the antagonism of most men against God, yet it is true. Just imagine how contradictory it is to see a *rational creature*...

- cursing God
- denying God
- rejecting God
- hurting people
- damaging himself
- ridiculing, persecuting and killing those who profess God

There is no way a rational creature would act like this unless he was enslaved by the dominion of darkness.

**Mat 6:23** “*But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!*”

**John 1:4-5** “*In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.*”

**John 3:19** *This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.*

**Rom 13:12** *The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light.*

**2 Cor 3:14** *But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away.*

**2 Cor 4:4** *The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

**Eph 4:18** *They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.*

**1 John 2:11** *But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.*

2. Note that it is God Himself who has rescued us from darkness. The word *rescued* (*erurato*) means to rescue or snatch from darkness. A person lost in pitch black darkness is hopeless unless someone rescues him. And note: he cannot be rescued by those who are lost in the same darkness as he is. No person who is in the world of darkness has light, or else he would use the light to get out of the darkness. This is the very reason God had to rescue man. He alone is light; therefore, He alone could reach down and snatch man from the darkness. How did He do this? The answer is given in the next point.
3. God transferred us, brought us into the kingdom of His dear Son, into the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must always remember that the kingdom of Christ already exists.

=> His rule and reign already exists in the spiritual world or spiritual dimension of being, that is, in heaven.

=> His rule and reign already exists in the hearts and lives of believers in this physical world or physical dimension of being.

The message of the glorious gospel is that God has transferred the believer from the dominion of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son. (See *Kingdom of Heaven*, Mt. 19:23-24.)

**John 3:3** *In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."*

**John 18:36-37** *Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place." "You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."*

**Acts 14:22** *Strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said.*

**Rom 14:17** *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

**1 Cor 15:25** *For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.*

**Heb 1:8** *But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the sceptre of your kingdom.*

**Rev 11:15** *The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."*

**Isa 9:7** *Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.*

**Jer 23:5** *"The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land."*

### **III. Colossians 01:14 Redemption, Forgiveness**

God has redeemed us, even forgiven our sins (see *Redemption* and *Forgiveness*, Eph. 1:7. Eph. 1:7 and Col. 1:14 are almost identical verses.) ■

## EPHESIANS 01:07 REDEMPTION — RANSOM

*“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace.” Ephesians 01:07*

God has redeemed us and forgiven our sins. The word *redemption* (apolutrosin) is one of the great words of the Bible. It conveys the idea of deliverance or setting a man free by paying a ransom. For example, a prisoner of war or a kidnapped person is ransomed or redeemed; or a convicted criminal is freed from the penalty of death. In every case the man is powerless to free himself. He cannot pay the penalty demanded to liberate himself from his situation or bondage. Note several significant facts.

1. Man has been captivated or kidnapped by several forces.
  - a. The force of sin. All men sin and cannot help but sin. Man is sold under sin. Sin has captivated him (Rom. 3:23; 7:14).
  - b. The force of corruption and death. The whole creation is corrupt (Rom. 8:21). Everything wastes away; it deteriorates, decays, ages, and eventually dies. Corruption and death have captivated man. (See 1 Cor. 15:42, 50; Gal. 6:8; 2 Pet. 1:4; 2:12, 19.)
  - c. The force of Satan. All unbelievers are under the power and influence of Satan. He has blinded their minds to the gospel (2 Cor. 4:4). He works in the those who are disobedient (Eph. 2:2). They are captivated by him (1 Jn. 5:19).
2. Three key ideas are included in the concept of redemption.
  - a. Man needs to be liberated, delivered, and set free.
  - b. Man is unable to liberate himself. He has no energy, no power, no ability to free himself.
  - c. God has redeemed man by the blood of His Son Jesus Christ. God Himself has paid the ransom for man’s release — the ransom of a life for a life. God gave His own Son so that man might be set free. Man has been redeemed through the blood of Jesus Christ (see Lev. 17:11; Mt. 20:28; Rom. 3:24; 1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23; Col. 1:14; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; Heb. 9:15; 1 Pet. 1:18f; 2 Pet. 2:1; Rev. 5:9; 14:3-4). This is extremely important to note: when a man *truly* calls upon the Lord to save him, God buys him right out of the marketplace of this corruptible life (Rom. 10:13). God redeems him once for all, purchases and removes him from further sale. He is redeemed eternally (see Gal. 3:13; 4:5; Col. 4:5).
3. God redeems man because of the riches of His grace (see Eph. 2:8-9). He loves man with an unbelievable love — a love so great that it spurs Him to do whatever is necessary to save man.

**Lev 17:11** *For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.*

**Mat 20:28** *Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*

**Rom 3:24** *And are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

**1 Cor 6:20** *You were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.*

**1 Cor 7:23** *You were bought [redeemed] at a price; do not become slaves of men.*

**Eph 1:7** *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.*

**Col 1:14** *In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

**1 Tim 2:5-6** *For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men – the testimony given in its proper time.*

**Heb 9:15** *For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance – now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.*

**1 Pet 1:18-19** *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

**2 Pet 2:1** *But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them – bringing swift destruction on themselves.*

**Rev 5:9** *And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation."*

**Rev 14:3-4** *And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they kept themselves pure. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among men and offered as first fruits to God and the Lamb. □*

## EPHESIANS 01:07 FORGIVENESS

*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace. **Ephesians 01:07***

The word *forgiveness* (aphesin) means to send off, to send away, to release, to let go. The word for *sin* (paraptomaton) means transgression, trespass, a falling by the way, or deviating from the way. All men...

- have transgressed the law of God
- have deviated from God
- have fallen from the way of God

Therefore, all men stand guilty of having broken the law of God, and the penalty for breaking the law is death. However, the blood of Jesus Christ brings forgiveness to men. How? Jesus Christ died *for man*. He took the penalty of sins and bore the punishment Himself. He was able to do this because He was the Perfect and Ideal Man, and as the Ideal Man, He could stand for and represent all men. When He died, He died as the Ideal Man, as the Representative for all men. Any person who really believes that Jesus Christ died for him is forgiven his sins. God takes his faith and counts it as the death of Jesus Christ. God sees the man as being *in Jesus Christ*, as being in the death of Jesus Christ. God counts the death of Jesus Christ for the death of the man. Therefore, the guilt and penalty for breaking God's laws are completely removed. The man's sins and guilt are sent away or washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ.

*Acts 5:31* God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Saviour that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.

*Acts 13:38* "Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you."

*Acts 26:18* To open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me [Christ Jesus].

*Eph 1:7* In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace. □

# GOD AND CHRIST (PART 1): THE PERSON OF CHRIST COLOSSIANS 01:15

## *Introduction*

This Scripture is one of the most important passages ever written. It does two very significant things.

=> It destroys false teaching and false thoughts about God and Jesus Christ.

=> It reveals exactly who God and Jesus Christ are.

This was the very purpose of Paul. False teaching had seeped into the Colossian church, false teaching that attacked Jesus Christ. It was called Gnosticism. This was one of the major reasons the pastor of the Colossian church (Epaphras) had visited Paul: to get Paul's advice in dealing with the heresy. The unfortunate thing is this: the teachings of Gnosticism have continued to plague the church down through the centuries, even today. In one form or another similar teachings are always being used to attack the church. Because of this, the teachings of Gnosticism and its *modern counterpart* will be dealt with in the points where they apply. The point to remember is this: throughout this passage Paul is answering the false teaching that had seeped into the church. And there is no better way to counteract false teaching than to present the truth. The false teaching was an attack against Jesus Christ, against both His work and Person. Therefore, Paul takes up the pen and proclaims God and Christ (Part I): the Person of Christ.

I. Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God (v. 15).

II. Jesus Christ is above all things (v. 15).

## ***I. Colossians 01:15 Jesus Christ, the Image of God***

Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God. The word *image* (eikon) means the exact image, the very person of God.

=> It means that Jesus Christ was the very *representation of God* — *God in every respect*. Wuest quotes Lightfoot as saying that “image” means a mark or figure burned or stamped on (something)...a precise reproduction in every respect.

=> It means that Jesus Christ was the perfect manifestation or revelation of God. God is invisible or unseen, but Jesus Christ reveals God to the world. He reveals God as the exact image, as the perfect representation of God.

The impact of this truth about Jesus Christ has explosive repercussions for man. It destroys all false teaching about God and Christ, and it reveals God to man. It shows man who God is and what He is like. As stated in the introduction, this was the very purpose of Paul. False teaching had seeped into the Colossian church, false teaching that had attacked who Jesus Christ was. Note how forcefully the truth destroys the error.

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1. Gnosticism said there were many intermediaries — many mediators (emanations) — between God and man, that Jesus Christ was not the only mediator.
  - a. The parallel with false teaching down through the centuries is clearly seen. There have been and always will be those who proclaim...
    - that Jesus Christ is not the only person who can bring us near God; that He is not the only mediator between God and man; that there are other mediators and intermediaries of God — other great teachers who are just as important as Jesus Christ — who can bring us in touch with God. (See Buddha. Mohammed, and other leaders of various cults, and self-proclaimed messiahs.)
  - b. However, note how the truth destroys this false teaching. Jesus Christ, who lived and walked among men, is the express image of God, the very Lord of the universe. This means a most significant thing: God is not what most men think. He is not an unconcerned and distant God who is off in outer space someplace. He is not separated from man by a host of intermediaries, by many different ways to reach Him. God is not out of touch with the world; He has not made it difficult to reach Him. He is close at hand, so close that He has come to earth and lived as a Man among us. And in doing so He has done two great things for us through the Lord Jesus Christ. First, He has shown us exactly who He is and what He is like; and second, He has shown us the way to reach Him.

Think for a moment about all that Jesus Christ shows us about God.

- => The fact that He came to earth shows us that He and He alone is the Supreme Person who can take us to God.
- => The fact that He came to earth shows us that God is near.
- => The fact that Jesus Christ lived as a Man, ministering and helping, shows us that God cares.
- => The fact that Jesus Christ died at the hands of men shows that God is love — He willingly sacrificed Himself. Being God He did not have to die. As Scripture says, He could have called down a host of angels to deliver Him.
- => The fact that Jesus Christ proclaimed salvation to man shows that God is a Saviour.
- => The fact that Jesus Christ proclaimed judgment upon evil and warned men of destruction shows that God is a just Lord.

The list could go on an on, but the point is clearly seen. God is not so unconcerned and far away from man that He has left man to grope and stumble through life on his own seeking after God. God loves and cares so much for man that He has shown man exactly who He is and what He is like and the way to reach Him. Jesus Christ alone is the image of God, the Supreme Person of the universe. He alone is the Mediator between God and Man. God is as close as Jesus Christ is.

**John 14:6** *Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

**Eph 2:18** *For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.*

**1 Tim 2:5** *For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

**Heb 8:6** *But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises. (see Heb. 12:24)*

**Heb 9:15** *For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant.*

**Heb 9:24** *For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.*

**Heb 10:20** *[Christ] by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body.*

**1 John 2:1** *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.*

**Heb 12:24** *To Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.*

**Col 1:19** *For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him.*

2. Gnosticism said the human body was evil. This teaching resulted in two different attitudes toward the body and life.
  - => Some said the body needed to be disciplined, controlled and taken care of as much as possible. By controlling its urges and appetites and keeping it fit, the corruption and evil of the body could be mastered more easily.
  - => Others said the very opposite: what was done with the body mattered little, for it was evil and doomed to death. Therefore, once a person took care of his spirit, he could then eat, drink and be merry.
    - a. The parallel with the false teaching of today is clearly seen.
      - => Some concentrate upon the body and its health through recreation, discipline and strict living, seeking to overcome the evil, that is, the corruption, disease, aging and dying of the body, as much as possible.
      - => Others live as they please, eating and drinking and partying as they wish, thinking that it matters little how they live. Just think how many people feel they can do their own thing — what they want, when they want — just so they believe in God and worship and do a good deed here and there.

The point to see is this: each gives attention to the spiritual only as he wishes, only as much as he feels is necessary to keep his spirit in touch with God. But his concentration is the body and its pleasure, whether the pleasure is the exhibition of discipline and control or the stimulating of the flesh.

- b. Note how the truth destroys this lifestyle and teaching. The human body is not evil; Jesus Christ shows us this. He is the image of God — the very Son of God Himself — who came to earth in a human body. Therefore, the human body could not be evil, for God cannot be touched with evil.

The human body has to be honourable or else Jesus Christ would not have wrapped Himself in a human body and come to earth. The conclusion is shocking and convulsive for the life of man. Since the body is honourable, it means that everything a man does with his body is important to his spiritual welfare. What he does with his body determines his relationship and destiny with God. It is totally impossible to keep one's spirit right with God and let one's body go its own way. A person is a person, both spirit and body. Therefore, he is to honour God with *both his spirit and body*, just as Jesus Christ did *in the body* given him by God. (See Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 6:12-20.)

**Rom 12:1** *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship.*

**1 Cor 6:13** *“Food for the stomach and the stomach for food” — but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.*

**1 Cor 6:19-20** *Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.*

**Col 1:22** *But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.*

3. Gnosticism said the way to God was through learning a certain amount of knowledge and certain key words that would assure the opening up of spiritual insight. The emphasis was upon the intellect and learning, knowledge and insight, personal improvement and self-effort in achieving acceptance with God.
- a. The parallel with so much of man's natural thinking is evident. So many feel safe and secure if they...
- know about God and religion
  - know religious phrases and words and can talk in pious and religious language
  - are religious enough to learn about God and religion

But note: knowing about someone is not knowing the person; it is not personal knowledge.

- b. The truth revealed by Jesus Christ strikes at the very foundation of such thoughts and teachings. God does not save a person because he thinks about God and knows some things about religion and God. God saves the uneducated as well as the educated, the simple as well as the intellectual, the ignorant as well as the knowledgeable, the poor as well as the rich, the young as well as the adult. This is seen in that Jesus Christ, who is the image of God...
- came to earth as a baby.
  - was reared by simple, poor parents.
  - was not educated at a university or any other school beyond the local community synagogue.
  - always ministered and reached out to the needy of the world — those who had need, regardless of age, simplicity, suffering, ignorance or any other unfortunate circumstance.

Jesus Christ reveals that God saves all who come to the Father through Him — through Him who redeems us and forgives our sins (Col. 1:14).

*Mat 22:9* 'Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.'

*Rom 10:12-13* For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile — the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

*Col 1:28* We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.

*1 Tim 2:4* Who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

*Rev 22:17* The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

*Isa 45:22* "Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other."

*Isa 55:1* "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost."

The conclusion is forceful: Jesus Christ is the express image, the exact representation, the perfect manifestation, the very Person of God Himself. There is no other person who can bring us near God and no other life-style to follow in reaching God. Jesus Christ is the Sovereign Majesty of the universe who came to earth as God to save men.

*2 Cor 5:19-21* That God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

*We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

***1 Tim 3:16** Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.*

## **II. Colossians 01:15 Jesus Christ, the Supreme Being**

Jesus Christ is the firstborn above all things. The word "firstborn" does not mean that Jesus Christ was the first created being of the universe. It means *priority, superiority, pre-eminence, supremacy*. It means that He existed before all creation as the Supreme Being of the universe. All creation is His heritage. (See *Jesus Christ, Eternal*, Col. 1:16; 1:17. See Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:18.)

***John 10:30** "I and the Father are one."*

***John 14:9-10** Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work."*

***2 Cor 4:4** The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

***Phil 2:6** [Christ] Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped.*

***Heb 1:3** The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. ■*

# GOD AND CHRIST (PART II): CHRIST THE CREATOR COLOSSIANS 01:16–17

## *Introduction: Creation*

This passage concerns the creation of the universe. It deals with such questions as...

- What is the origin of the universe?
- How did the world come into existence?
- What was the force that brought the universe forth?
- Is there more than one world or universe? More than the physical dimension of being? Are there invisible worlds in other dimensions?
- What is the purpose or end of things or of creation?
- What holds things together? What is the cohesive force that gives order to the universe? What is the power behind the laws of nature such as gravity?

There are basically three views of creation.

First, there is the secularist or humanist view, the idea that the world just happened by chance. No force or power created the world. No power stands behind the world. There was nothing, and then by some means and in some way some gas or some element of some sort just appeared...

- out of nothing
- out of nowhere

Then through eons of ages, the single gas or element became two elements and the evolutionary process began until eventually the world was created. Of course, there have been and always will be various ideas as to how the evolutionary process happened (see the present idea of the Big Bang theory that is somewhat popularized). However, the essence or seed of the secularist or humanist is that the world or universe began out of nothing and out of nowhere.

Second, there is the view that some god did create the world, but he is far off and removed from the world. The far off god is thought of in various ways:

=> Some see him as good; others as evil.

=> Some think he created the world himself; others that he used intermediary forces.

This was the view of Gnosticism, the false teaching that had seeped into the church at Colosse. It is also the view held by men in today's society. They just *feel* that God is far away, completely removed from the world. If they think about creation at all, they cannot see God as having created the world, for He is too far removed from it. He therefore must have used other forces or beings, other intermediaries or some other way to make the world.

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Third, there is the pure Christian view, the truth that God Himself, the Sovereign Majesty of the universe, created the world in the person of Jesus Christ. This is, of course, the discussion of this passage. As it is studied, note the force of its proclamation: it declares in no uncertain terms how the cosmos or universe began. Note also how the proclamation destroys all false teaching and how much more logical and understandable the truth is in comparison to the false beliefs. Christ is the Creator of the universe.

- I. Christ created all things (v. 16).
- II. Christ created all things for Himself (v. 16).
- III. Christ is before all (v. 17).
- IV. Christ holds all things together (v. 17).

### **I. *Colossians 01:16 Jesus Christ, the Creator***

Jesus Christ created all things. This is a matter of fact declaration, yet note how profound the truth is and how much is covered in the verse.

1. The words *by Him* (en autoi) mean *in Him*; that is, creation took place *in* Christ, *within* His very being.

- => The heart of Christ desired the world.
- => The mind of Christ planned the world.
- => The will of Christ destined the world.
- => The Word of Christ created the world.

The creation of the world took place within Christ, within His personality and being. The world was born within Him.

- => It was the *love of Christ* that moved His heart to create the world.
- => It was the *knowledge of Christ* that aroused His mind to plan the world.
- => It was the *riches of His grace* that stirred Him to will the world.
- => It was the *power of His Word* that energized or brought the world into existence.

The universe exists because of Christ and because of Him alone. The idea for the universe was born *in Him*, and the actual creation of the universe took place by His own energy and effort. Jesus Christ Himself brought the universe into existence.

2. The words *all things* (ta panta) are very significant. They mean...

- “all things” collectively, that is, all the things within the universe were created by Christ.
- “all things” individually, that is, every single detail of creation, was created by Christ. Each particle and thing, each being and element has come into being in Christ and in Him alone.

The point is that nothing exists that was not created by Christ. All things were made by Him, even the very details of every single thing.

3. The words *were created* (ektisthe) are in the Greek aorist tense which simply means that creation was an historical event. Creation actually took place in this way. Jesus Christ Himself *created* the world. There was a time, a day, an hour, a moment when He spoke the Word and all things in their intricate detail came into being.
4. The creation of Christ includes all the worlds of all the dimensions of being. This is what is meant by the statement, “things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities.” Note how all inclusive the statement is:  
=> If there are other *visible and living planets and beings* in outer space, Christ created them.  
=> If there are invisible worlds and beings in other dimensions, Christ created them.

It does not matter what kind of world or creatures they may be — thrones, powers, rulers or authorities — Christ created them all. There is nothing in existence that He has not created.

=> no planet            => no vegetation            => no star            => no mineral  
=> no creature            => no element            => no dimension            => no thing

**John 1:3** *Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.*

**1 Cor 8:6** *Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.*

**Eph 3:9** *And to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.*

**Col 1:16** *For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.*

## II. *Colossians 01:16 Purpose of Creation*

Christ created all things *for Himself*. Think for a moment: if Christ really created all things, to whom would creation look? Who would creation praise, honour, worship and serve? The answer is obvious: creation looks to its Creator. Creation owes its existence to its Creator; therefore, creation is to exalt its Creator. Creation finds its end and consummation in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ created the universe...

- that in the ages to come He might show the riches of His grace and kindness (Eph. 2:7).
- that He might reveal His glory (Rom. 8:18).

Simply stated, the universe was created for Christ, that it might be His...

- to love
- to receive
- to bless
- to save
- to redeem
- to receive

Therefore, creation owes its praise and honour, worship and service to the Lord Jesus Christ. The universe exists for its Creator.

**1 Cor 15:28** *When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.*

**Eph 1:10** *To be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfilment – to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.*

**Col 1:19-20** *For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

**Heb 1:2** *But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.*

**Heb 2:10** *In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.*

**Rom 11:36** *For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.*

### **III. Colossians 01:17 Jesus Christ Is Eternal**

Jesus Christ is before all things. This is a critical point; it means two things.

1. Jesus Christ was before all things in time. Before the first thing was ever created, Jesus Christ was already there. He is not a created being; He is the Creator. There was nothing existing in the universe when He created. Before the beginning of time, before the universe ever existed, He was there. He alone is eternal.

**Psa 90:2** *Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*

**Prov 8:23** *I was appointed from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began.*

**John 1:1** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

**John 17:5** *“And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.”*

**Phil 2:6-8** *Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a*

*servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross!*

**Rev 22:13** *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.*

2. Jesus Christ is before all things in importance, supremacy, and pre-eminence. Nothing is superior to Him. He alone is the Sovereign Majesty of the universe. He alone stands before all as Supreme; all else — every single thing — stands under Him owing their existence, worship and service to Him.

**Rom 9:5** *Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.*

**Col 1:15** *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.*

**Col 1:17** *He is before all things.*

**Thought 1.** This point destroys all ideas that Jesus Christ is only a great teacher, only one among many great men who can lead us to God.

#### **IV. Colossians 01:17 Jesus Christ, Creator**

Jesus Christ holds all things together. Wuest quotes Lightfoot as making an excellent statement on this point:

*[Jesus Christ] is the principle of cohesion in the universe. He impresses upon creation that unity and solidarity which makes it a cosmos (an ordered system) instead of a chaos (an unformed mass). Thus (to take one instance) the action of gravitation, which keeps in their places things fixed and regulates the motions of things moving, is an expression of His mind (Ephesians and Colossians, Vol. 1, p. 185).*

Barclay, as is so often the case, is descriptive in his exposition:

*...it is the Son who, as it were, holds the world together. That is to say, all the laws by which this world is an order and not a chaos are an expression of the mind of the Son. The law of gravity and all the so-called scientific laws are not only scientific laws; they are divine laws. They are the laws which make sense of the universe. They are the laws which make this a reliable and a dependable world. Every law of science and of nature is, in fact, an expression of the thought of God. It is by these laws, and therefore by the mind of God, that the universe hangs together, and does not disintegrate in chaos (The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, p. 144).*

The point is clear: Jesus Christ is what holds the world together. It is His love and power...

- that keeps the universe from flying apart and disintegrating
- that keeps all creatures from utterly destroying themselves through savagery

All things are held together by Jesus Christ, by His...

- energy
- unity
- force
- solidarity
- power
- cohesion
- order

**Col 1:17** *He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

**Heb 1:3** *The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.*

**Thought 1.** Jesus Christ is eternal. This says several important things about Christ.

- (1) Christ reveals the most important Person in all the universe. He reveals all that God is and wants to say to man. Therefore, Christ must be diligently studied, and all that He is and says must be heeded to the utmost (see Jn. 5:24).
- (2) Christ *reveals* God perfectly. He is God; therefore, when we look at Christ we see God (see *Jesus the Truth*, Jn. 14:6. See Jn. 14:9.)
- (3) Christ reveals that God is the most wonderful Person. God is far beyond anyone we could have ever dreamed. He is loving and caring, full of goodness and truth: He will not tolerate injustices: murder, stealing, lying, cheating, abuse, mistreatment, ignoring and neglecting of husband, wife, child, neighbour, brother, sister or stranger. God loves and is working and moving toward a perfect universe that will be filled with people who choose to love, worship, live and work for Him (see Jn. 5:24-29).

**Thought 2.** The very nature of Christ is...

- to exist eternally
- to exist in a perfect state of being, knowing nothing but eternal perfection
- to exist in perfect communion and fellowship eternally (see 1 Jn. 1:3)

Note: it is the very nature of Christ that shall be imparted to believers; therefore, all three things will become our experience.

**John 14:20** *On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.*

**Rom 8:29** *For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*

**2 Cor 3:18** *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

**Phil 3:21** *Who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.*

***2 Pet 1:4** Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.*

***1 John 3:2** Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ■*

# GOD AND CHRIST (PART III): CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH COLOSSIANS 01:18–19

## *Introduction*

This is one of the great pictures of Christ and of the church. It pictures in the clearest of terms what the relationship is between Christ and the church. It is a passage that should be studied by every local church time and again.

- I. He is the head of the church (v. 18).
- II. He is the beginning of the church (v. 18).
- III. He was the first from the dead (v. 18).
- IV. He is supreme in all things (v. 18).
- V. He is filled with all the fullness of God Himself (v. 19).

## **I. *Colossians 01:18 Jesus Christ, Head of the Church***

Jesus Christ is the head of the church. (See *Church*, Mt. 16:19 for the meaning of the word *church*.) This is the most common description of Christ and the church: the picture of the human body with Christ as the Head and the church as His body. When the church is called the body of Christ at least three ideas are pictured. (See Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:12-31; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:19-22.)

1. There is the idea of life, of the most vital connection and relationship. A body cannot live apart from the head and a head cannot live apart from the body. Both the head and body are absolutely necessary for there to be life. Without Jesus Christ, the church does not exist, and without the church the life of Christ on earth could not be known or exist. Christ is made known only through the lives of His people, the church. That is His chosen method to make Himself known.

**Thought 1.** This means something of critical importance.

- (1) If any part of the world is without the church (His body), that part of the world cannot know Christ the Head.
    - (2) If the world sees a body of people with some head other than Christ, then that body of people is not the church, not the true church.
  2. There is the idea of activity and its source. It is the body that acts, but it is the head that tells the body to act. It is the head that...
    - plans for the body
    - arouses the body
    - directs the body
    - activates the body
    - guides the body
    - drives the body
    - inspires the body
-

The body does nothing without the head. All that the body does begins in the head.

**Thought 1.** This is significant. It means that the church is totally dependent upon the Head, Jesus Christ. The body finds its purpose, meaning and significance in the Head who is Jesus Christ. Therefore, the body or church must learn more and more to acknowledge and honour the Head. The body must learn to look to the Head for its plans, guidance and motivation.

3. There is the idea of control. The head is to rule and reign over the body. The body is to be controlled by the head. The body is not to act apart from the head. But note: sometimes a body does act apart from the head. But when it does, it is because of disease, handicap or injury. There is some malfunction – some physical, emotional or mental problem. So it is with the church. When Christ does not control the church body, it is because there is some malfunction, some problem within the body.

**Thought 1.** The church body is to let Christ control it. The church is to walk a disciplined, controlled life just like Christ says. When the church lives like Christ dictates, then the church body lives a life free of disease and injury.

**Eph 1:22** *And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church.*

**Eph 4:15** *Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.*

**Eph 5:23** *For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour.*

**Col 1:18** *And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.*

**Col 2:19** *He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.*

## II. **Colossians 01:18** *Jesus Christ, the Beginning of the Church*

Jesus Christ is the beginning of the church. The word *beginning* (arche) has a twofold idea.

1. *Beginning* means creative power. When something first begins, it is created or brought into being by some person or thing greater than itself. Jesus Christ was the Person who gave birth to the church. He is greater than the church; therefore, He had the power to create the church and bring it into existence.
- => The church is the idea of His mind: He was the One who dreamed of the church, thought it up and saw the great purpose it could accomplish upon earth.
- => The church is the plan of His heart: He saw how the church could be founded and built upon the earth and His heart wanted it.

- => The church is the desire of His will: He desired and longed for the church; therefore, He willed to create it.
- => The church is the activity of His hands and life. Jesus Christ came to earth and gave birth to the church (see *Church*, Mt. 16:18).
- => The church is the result of His love: He loved the world; therefore, He founded His church and He reaches out to the world through His church.
- => The church is the subject of His care: He looks after and oversees the welfare of His church, making sure that it fulfils its purpose on earth. Even the very gates of hell cannot prevail against the church because of His love and care (Mt. 16:18).

The point is this: Jesus Christ began the church. He is the beginning, the creative power who founded and gave birth to the church.

**Thought 1.** Jesus Christ is the Person — the only Person — who is to be honoured and acknowledged as the beginning of God’s church on earth. No other person is to ever usurp the place of Christ in the church. He and He alone is to be praised as the Source of the church’s life and being. He and He alone can bring men to God.

2. *Beginning* means *first in time*. Jesus Christ was the first Person of the church. He began the church; therefore, He was the first member, the great and glorious Founder of the church. All others who come into the church follow Him.

**Thought 1.** This means something of extreme significance. A person who does not follow Christ the Founder fails to really enter the church which He founded. A person may sit in the pews of a building and hear the voice of the preacher, but unless he follows Christ, he is not in the body and movement of the church’s Founder. He follows some other body and movement. And one thing must be noted: Christ was very clear about His body and movement — about how His church and followers are to live. Therefore, to be a part of His church, a person has to live in the will and movement which He established.

**Eph 4:14-15** *Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.*

**Col 2:18-19** *Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.*

**1 John 2:23-24** *No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also. See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father.*

### **III. *Colossians 01:18 Church and The Resurrection of Jesus Christ***

Jesus Christ was the first to arise from the dead. There are three ways that the resurrection of Christ and the church are closely related.

1. The resurrection of Christ is the very reason the church exists. If Jesus Christ had not arisen from the dead, there would be no church. God loves man and longs for man to live forever in His presence. He made such possible through the resurrection of Jesus Christ and by establishing the church. What happened was this: Jesus Christ became the first person who ever arose from the dead and who never has to die again. He has blazed the path of conquering death; and because He has, He stands as the First, the Pattern, the Forerunner, the Ideal Man in conquering death. Therefore, when a person truly believes in the resurrection of Christ, God takes that belief and counts the person as being in Christ. God counts the man's trust in the resurrection of Christ as the energy and power of the Lord's resurrection. Therefore, when the man is ready to leave this world, he is *in the energy and power* of Christ's resurrection, and the Lord's energy and power transfers the person right into the presence of God.

Now note: this is the message and hope of the gospel. It is the people who believe in the resurrection of Christ who make up the church. This is what the church is: a body of people who have trusted the power of Christ's resurrection to conquer death for them and to transfer them into the eternal presence of God. Apart from the resurrection of Christ there would be no hope and no message of conquering power; therefore, there would be no church.

**Thought 1.** The resurrection of Christ and the church are tied together.

- => Every person who truly believes in the resurrection of Christ is a true member of the Lord's church.
- => Every true member of the church is a person who has truly believed in the resurrection of Christ.
- => There is no person who is a true member of the church who has not believed in the resurrection of Christ.
- => There is no person who is a member of God's true church who has not believed in the Lord's resurrection.

**Thought 2.** The church is a body of people who truly believe in the resurrection of Christ. The conquest of death is the church's great message of hope. It is this very belief that distinguishes it from all other organizations of men such as social and civic clubs.

2. The resurrection of Christ and the life of the church means there is a new life available for people. When Christ was raised from the dead, His body and life were entirely different from His former body and life. He had a changed body and life; He was raised

to live a new life, to live face to face with God forever. So it is with the church. The church is to be a picture of the resurrected and changed life of Christ. The church is...

- to be entirely different from the world
  - to be separated from the world and given over completely to God
  - to live its life as though it is face to face with God
3. The resurrection of Christ is the power by which the church is to live. The resurrection of Christ proves there is unlimited, enormous power available for living and conquering all the foes of life, even the foes of death and judgment. The church is to live as resurrected beings — beings with a new life, a life of power and energy that conquers all the trials of life. Just imagine! Power to conquer all the trials and temptations of life, including the terrible trials of death and judgment. Such power is available, and it is to be *alive and active* in the church. In fact, the resurrected power of the Lord Jesus Christ is to be the very life blood of the church.

*Acts 26:22-23* “But I have had God’s help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen — that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles.”

*Rom 4:25* He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

*Rom 10:9* That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

*1 Cor 15:4* That he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

*Eph 1:19-20* And his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.

*1 Pet 1:3* Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

#### **IV. Colossians 01:18 The Pre-eminence of Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ is supreme in all things. God the Father has only one child, the Lord Jesus Christ who is God the Son.

Note two points.

1. Jesus Christ is the supreme, preeminent Person in the universe because He died and arose again for man’s salvation. It is because Christ was perfectly obedient to God the

Father in dying and being raised from the dead that God the Father has made God the Son pre-eminent in everything.

Another way to say the same thing is this: God the Son willingly came to earth to die and to arise again for man's salvation. Therefore, God the Father is bound to love God the Son with a supreme love. He is bound to do the ultimate for Christ, to give Christ the supremacy over all things.

Still another way to say the same thing is this: God the Father has only one child who is the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son. God the Son was *perfectly obedient* in coming to earth to die for man and to arise from the dead. Therefore, God the Father is bound to love His only Son with a supreme love. He is bound to do everything and to arrange everything to focus around His only Son.

The point is this: God's great love for His Son explains why the church exists. God had created the world and man to worship and serve Him, but when man rebelled and refused to honour Him, God had to accomplish His purpose some other way. All men were not going to worship and serve Him, but He knew that some would if He provided a way. This God did. He provided the way through His Son Jesus Christ and the church. The person who believes in His Son Jesus Christ is forgiven for his rebellion and accepted into the new body of people God is creating, the body called "the church."

=> This is what the church is: a body of people who have approached God through the Lord Jesus Christ to worship and serve God.

2. This is the reason Jesus Christ is to have the supremacy, the pre-eminence in all things in all things: He is the Person who came to earth to suffer and die. He is One who has loved and given Himself for the church. He is the One who died to establish the church (Eph 5:25). Therefore, God has made Christ the pre-eminent and supreme Majesty of the universe.

=> Jesus Christ has been exalted to the right hand of God the Father.

**Mark 16:19** *After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God.*

**Eph 1:20** *Which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.*

=> Jesus Christ has been given a name above every name.

**Phil 2:9** *Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name.*

=> Jesus Christ has been given all things.

**Rev 5:12** *In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise!"*

=> Jesus Christ has been made both Lord and Christ (Messiah, Saviour).

**Acts 2:36** “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

**1 Cor 8:6** Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

=> Jesus Christ has been exalted above all.

**John 3:31** “The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all.”

=> Jesus Christ is Lord of both the living and dead.

**Rom 14:9** For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

=> Jesus Christ has a more superior name than the angels.

**Heb 1:4** So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

=> Jesus Christ has more honour than even the greatest of men.

**Heb 3:3** Jesus has been found worthy of greater honour than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honour than the house itself.

=> Jesus Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.

**Rev 1:11** Which said: “Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.”

=> Jesus Christ has all things put under His feet.

**Eph 1:22** And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church.

=> Jesus Christ has all things in submission to Him.

**1 Pet 3:22** Who has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand – with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

## V. **Colossians 01:19** *Jesus Christ and the Fullness of God*

Jesus Christ is filled with all the fullness of God Himself. All that God is dwells in Jesus Christ. This is what this verse means. Jesus Christ is fully God in all God’s divine nature. The word *dwelt* (katoikeo) means to make *permanent* abode or to be at home *permanently*. All the fullness of God was *at home* in Christ before He came to earth, *at home* in Him while He was on earth, and shall continue to be *at home* within Him throughout all eternity.

Jesus Christ is God, the Son of God who possesses the perfect nature of God the Father in all His Being and attributes.

This is significant for the church because it means...

- that God is the Head of the church
- that God is the beginning of the church
- that God is the One who came to earth, died and arose from the dead
- that God is the preeminent Person of the universe
- that God in all His fullness dwells in Jesus Christ, the Son of God

It means that the church worships God when it worships the Son of God. It means that God the Father is honoured when God the Son is honoured. Both the Father and the Son have the same perfect nature; therefore, what is done for the Son is done for the Father. The Son is to be worshipped and served even as the Father is. In fact, because of what God the Son has done in coming to earth — dying and arising from the dead — God the Father wants His Son to have the pre-eminence. Note the word “pleased”: it pleases the Father that His Son has His nature and is the pre-eminent majesty of the universe. (See Ph. 2:5-11.)

**Thought 1.** The church can please the Father only by praising and serving the Lord Jesus Christ, the One in whom dwells all the fullness of God.

**John 1:1-2** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.*

**John 1:16** *From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another.*

**Col 2:9** *For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.*

**Eph 1:23** *[Christ] Which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.*

**1 Tim 3:16** *Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.*

**1 Tim 6:15** *Which God will bring about in his own time — God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords.*

**Heb 1:3** *The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. ■*